

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 20, 2005

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

We the undersigned Members of Congress are writing to express our support for ALS research funding through the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP) at the Department of Defense.


Better known as Lou Gehrig's disease, ALS is a progressive, fatal neurodegenerative disease that attacks nerve cells and pathways in the brain and spinal cord, ultimately resulting in a loss of voluntary muscle control, paralysis and death. The average life expectancy for people with ALS is two to five years from the time of diagnosis. But what makes ALS particularly devastating is that as people progressively lose the ability to walk, move their arms, talk and even breathe, their minds remain sharp; aware of the limits ALS has imposed on their lives. And as people with ALS, their families and caregivers continue their fight against the disease, each day they hold onto the hope that our nation will find effective treatments and a cure for ALS.

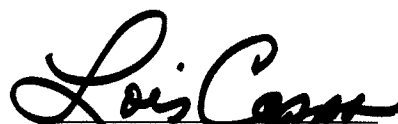
Unfortunately, we currently do not know what causes ALS or how it can be prevented and cured. Moreover, only one drug, approved by the FDA in late 1995, currently is available to treat ALS. But we can change this by committing the research funding that is necessary to find treatments and a cure for ALS.

Last year, Congress recommended ALS as one of just 20 diseases to be studied under the PRMRP as part of the FY 2005 DOD Appropriations bill. In fact, the program awarded \$2.7 million in funding for ALS research earlier this year. By continuing funding for ALS research through the PRMRP, we can move forward in the fight to discover treatments and a cure for ALS.


Support for this research also will benefit our nation's veterans and those serving in the armed forces today and in the future. As you may know, several studies have found a higher incidence of ALS associated with military service. In fact, a study conducted by the DOD and VA in 2003 found that veterans who served in the 1991 Persian Gulf War were twice as likely to develop ALS as those who did not serve in the war, while another study published in 2005 by Harvard epidemiologists found that people with a history of any military service are at a 50% greater risk of ALS than those who did not serve in the military. Moreover, the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, which was created by Congress in 1998, concluded in a November 2004 report that exposure to neurotoxins during the Gulf War probably was the cause of Gulf War-related illnesses. Importantly, the report recommended that research into the causes and treatments for Gulf War-related illnesses should be a top funding priority. Continued funding for ALS through the PRMRP could help researchers to identify toxins that may be linked to ALS and help reduce the future incidence of the disease not only within the military and veteran communities, but also in the general population.

By supporting funding for the PRMRP, Congress can help our nation find a treatment and cure for ALS and together we can strikeout Lou Gehrig's disease.

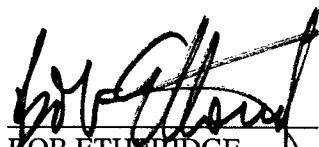
  
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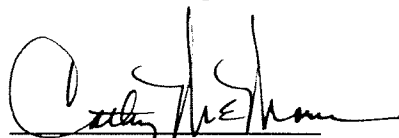
  
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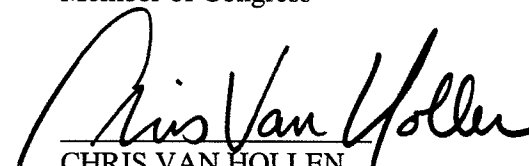
  
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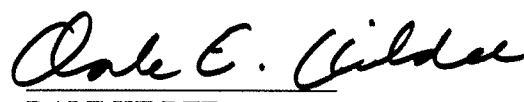
  
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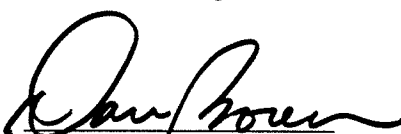
  
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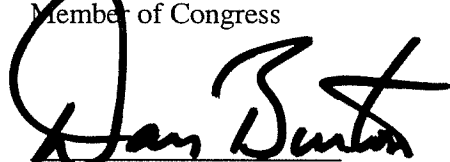
  
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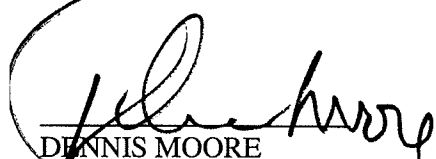
  
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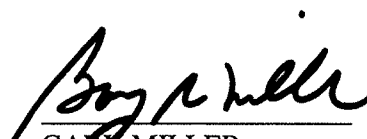
  
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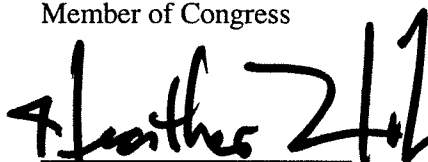
  
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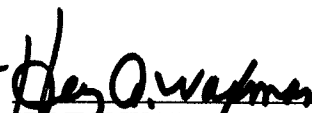
  
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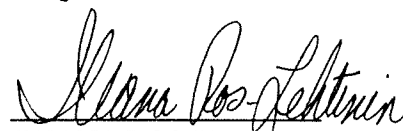
  
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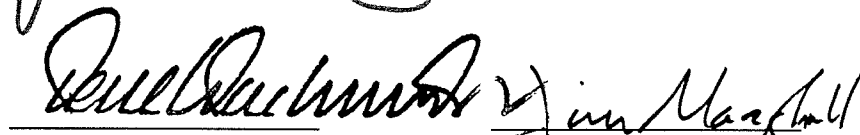
  
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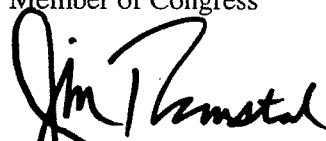
  
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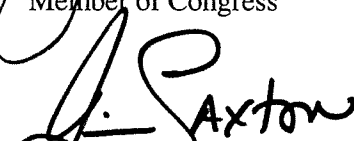
  
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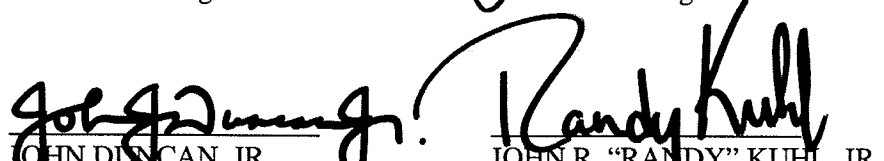
  
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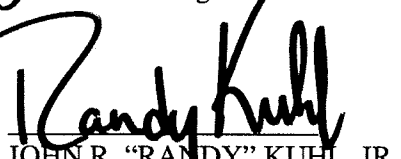
  
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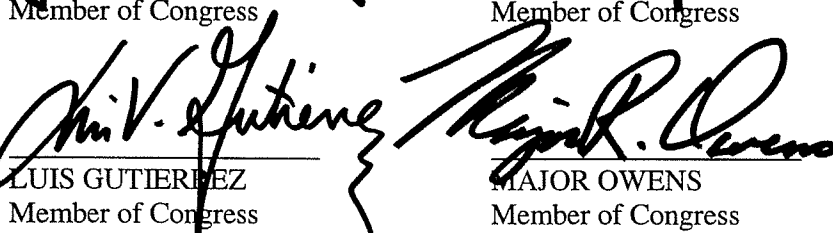
  
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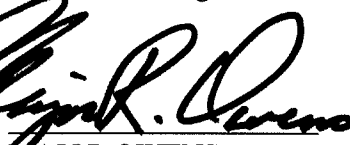
  
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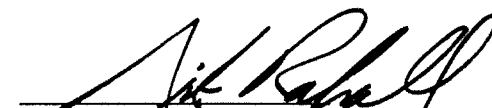
  
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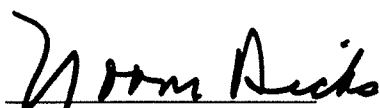
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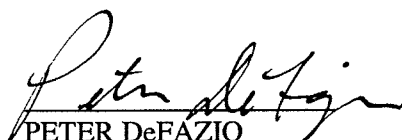
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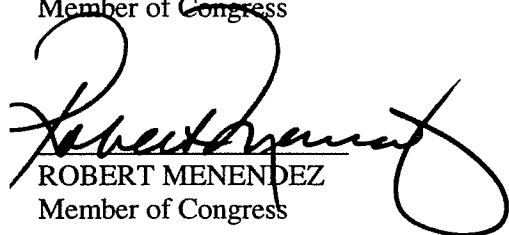
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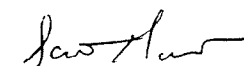
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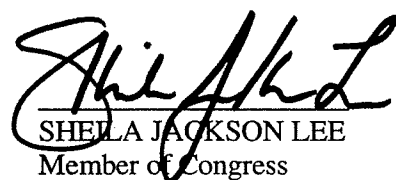
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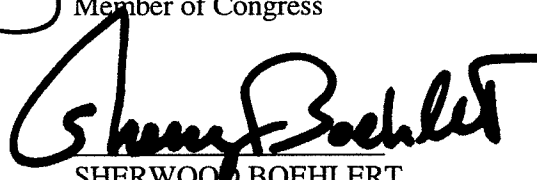
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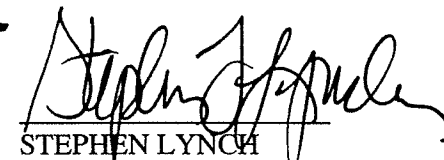
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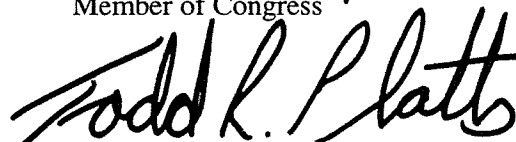
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